



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan

October 2012



Front cover:

Marsh and tidal swamp forest along the James River oxbow

Bill Wood

Bald eagle

Steve Maslowski/USFWS

Great blue heron

Bill Wood

Prothonotary warbler

USFWS

Back cover:

Marsh/tidal swamp forest

Bill Wood



*This blue goose, designed by
J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become
the symbol of the National Wildlife
Refuge System.*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of over 150 million acres including over 550 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. The Service also operates 70 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans (CCPs) provide long-term guidance for management decisions on a refuge and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes. CCPs also identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. CCPs do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan October 2012

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OCT 09 2012

Acting



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan *October 2012*

Presquile Refuge Vision Statement

Presquile National Wildlife Refuge exemplifies the majesty of our natural world and the significance of the Lower James River as a major tributary of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Throughout the year, bald eagles perch on the island's forested shores and survey the rich assemblage of wildlife: the wake of the prehistoric sturgeon heading to spawn, basking turtles in the warm spring sun, colorful warblers darting amongst trees all summer, and thousands of wintering waterfowl resting in the quiet waters of the winding river.

This isolated island bridges the modern world to its long and storied history of people connecting to the land. The joyful sound of children learning in the natural classroom echoes through the forest in this gateway to wild places. Stewardship fostered here generates action beyond the river in communities across their watershed.



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Presquile National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Plan October 2012

Summary

Type of Action:	Administrative–Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Lead Agency:	U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Location:	Presquile National Wildlife Refuge Chesterfield County, Virginia
Administrative Headquarters:	Eastern Virginia Rivers National Wildlife Refuge Complex Warsaw, Virginia
Responsible Official:	Wendi Weber, Regional Director, Region 5
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This Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the 1,329-acre Presquile National Wildlife Refuge (NWR, refuge) is the culmination of a planning effort involving Virginia State agencies, local partners, refuge neighbors, private landowners, and the local community. This CCP establishes 15-year management goals and objectives for wildlife and habitats, public use, and administration and facilities.

Our management will emphasize specific refuge habitats to support priority refuge species whose habitat needs benefit other species of conservation concern that are found around the refuge and in the larger landscape of the lower James River. In particular, we will promote habitat for priority birds identified in Bird Conservation Region 30, such as migratory waterfowl, waterbirds, and mature forest-dependent birds. Other priority refuge resources of concern, including the federally endangered Atlantic sturgeon and federally threatened sensitive joint-vetch. Under this plan, we will protecting, restoring, and monitoring the refuge's tidal freshwater marsh, tidal swamp forest, and mixed mesic forest habitats, and promote natural forest succession on a portion of refuge land that is currently being managed as grassland. Our activities will include regularly evaluating and adapting our actions in conjunction with monitoring climate change impacts, including sea level rise.

We will increase our efforts to protect cultural resources on the refuge, as well as expand our understanding of those resources and their role in the area's cultural history. We will also enhance public use opportunities on the refuge. In particular, we will expand our on-refuge environmental education program through our partnership with the James River Association and bring an increased number of students to the refuge to participate in environmental education programs. We will continue to collaborate with new and existing partners to promote off-refuge environmental education and will expand the interpretive program on the refuge.

We will continue the current 3-day deer hunting program; however, under this plan we will consider extending the season length by approximately 2 days to provide a higher quality hunt experience. Under this plan, we also propose to evaluate, within 5 years, opportunities to open the refuge to a turkey hunt and initiate a program for youth hunters, if there is interest and resources are available.

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